

My name is Christine Schuman, from Sweet Grass County. I am an Eastern Montana native, ranch raised, the second generation of a 4 generation family living and working on the same ranch for 51 years. We run approximately 300 head of mother cows. I firmly believe family owned and operated ranches are the backbone of Montana. Sadly that backbone has been seriously compromised through the years by the economic atmosphere surrounding us. There are very few ranchers, whose wives or they do not have an outside income to help support their operation. Fortunately for us the movie industry has not only provided that income but the freedom to work off-farm without having to be committed to a full-time job in town. We can work enough projects to help sustain the ranch and still be home to calve, hay, irrigate, or whatever the ranch season demands. Location fees paid to land owners is another benefit. You will hear from many other industries that benefit directly or indirectly from film production in our state but as a landowner and lover of this state, the greatest benefit of filming in Montana is not only providing much needed cash flow to businesses, but filming does not impact the environment or change the landscape of our lives when they leave. It's a win-win situation because ranching is not a "lifestyle" for us but a way of life we want to continue and preserve. I urge all of you to vote for HB163.